

DfE shuns its own funding consultation

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The government is ignoring concerns from colleges, parents and learners about plans to fund education providers on a "per student" basis.

The reforms will affect all provision for 16 to 19-year-olds and replace the current funding system, which pays for the enrolment and achievement of qualifications individually.

However, a Department for Education (DfE) public consultation found that almost 80 per cent of respondents were opposed to the idea of a single rate for all full-time learners.

"We said that it was too simplistic. In the same way that there are programme cost weightings, there should be bands according to programme size," David Harbourne, director of policy and research at the Edge Foundation, said.

Respondents to the consultation, which included general FE colleges, sixth-form colleges and parents, warned that the single funding rate could encourage providers to deliver cheaper courses.

They also said additional costs and student requirements, as well as the variety in course lengths, meant the single rate wasn't flexible enough.

The reforms, which will also affect students up to the age of 24 with a learning disability or education, health and care plan, will be introduced in the 2013/14 academic year.

The change is designed to stop providers from enrolling learners on a large number of small or easy qualifications.

A DfE spokesperson said: "At the moment, as Professor Alison Wolf [author of the 14-19 review] highlighted, some 350,000 16 to 19-year-olds are on courses that do not benefit them. We could not let a system that allowed this to continue."

The single funding rate will pay for about 600 guided learning hours, regardless of what institution or qualification a student is enrolled on.

The change could affect the international baccalaureate, which is currently funded at 675 guided learning hours, as well as the larger programmes offered by University Technical Colleges.

Sandra Morton, chair of the International Baccalaureate Schools and Colleges Association, said: "To deliver this programme in 600 hours is at best unrealistic and at worst will be unworkable for some institutions."

"The international baccalaureate has already suffered from the reduction in Entitlement Funding from 114 to 30 guided learning hours."

"We have absorbed this reduction but further reductions will not only impact on the centres for international baccalaureate, but will hit hard schools and colleges."

The government promised to make "sufficient funding" available for at least three academic years to protect providers.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) welcomed the transitional protection, but said they were wary of "over-simplification" in the reforms.

"At a time when the 16-18 education budget is being cut, it is right to introduce these sorts of changes in stages," Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive of the AoC, said.



Farewell Geoff

A final interview with Geoff Russell, the first and now retiring chief executive of the Skills Funding Agency. See page 4.

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Denise Brown-Sackey



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Colleges break ranks and praise Ofsted

Warwick Mansell
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Inspectors this week received praise from two of England's largest colleges, despite new data confirming a sharp rise in the number of institutions receiving poor grades.

The principals of South Thames College, in south west London, and Leeds City College said they had been impressed with the fairness of recent inspection visits in which both received "good" overall verdicts.

Both colleges, which educate many disadvantaged students, said they had been concerned that inspectors would pre-judge them based on achievement data, as Ofsted under new chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw pushes a tough "no excuses" culture. Their fears had proved unfounded.

Sue Rimmer, principal of South Thames College, which was inspected in May, told *FE Week*: "Going into the inspection, we did have some concerns because of the things that we had heard, including particularly the rumours that the inspection result was more or less set before they walked through the door because of an overt reliance on raw data.

"But our experience was very positive. The inspectors were taking into account their personal judgment. They certainly talked to the students a lot - and one of the significant things for us was that there was a key focus on what they saw in the classroom."

Peter Roberts, principal of Leeds City College, which was also inspected in May, agreed. He said: "The inspectors never lost the focus on teaching and learning and the impact on the students, which no one would argue with."

The two colleges said they had both been fortunate to have had experienced inspection teams. However, their "good" verdicts appear to have been achieved in the face of an inspection regime which, new evidence suggests, is getting tougher even before the advent of a new framework next term.

Data compiled by the Association of Col-

leges (AoC), shown to *FE Week*, reveals that the proportion of colleges judged outstanding halved between September 2011 to March 2012 compared with the previous year, while the percentage graded inadequate leapt seven-fold.

In the year to September 2011, five colleges, or 7 per cent of those inspected, were found outstanding, compared with only 3 per cent (one college) in the following six months. Some 4 per cent (three colleges) were inadequate in September 2011 to September 2012, compared with 29 per cent (nine colleges) in the period to March this year.

Lesley Davies, the AoC's deputy chief executive, said: "Some of our member colleges have been disappointed in their inspection results over the past few months. Anecdotally, our members are reporting that the inspections have been inconsistent and there has been a lack of transparency about the process."

Mr Roberts said the 20-inspector team had managed to get its head around the complexity of an organisation operating on seven sites with 1,200 staff. He added, however, that Leeds City College, which was found to be a "good college with good capacity for improvement" knew it was still on an improvement journey.

Ms Rimmer said there were still areas of concern around Ofsted, including the "punitive" language of "requires improvement" being introduced to replace the satisfactory grade for the new inspection framework starting in September.

She was also concerned that inspectors may now over-emphasise particular performance management arrangements in colleges, when their main focus should be the student experience, and that many experienced Her Majesty's Inspectors may be nearing retirement.

She said: "For us, the experience in the core inspection team was very noticeable; that they had been HMIs and were drawing on a lot of experience, and they are getting to the stage where they are approaching retirement.

"If new inspectors are coming in who do not have that experience and understanding, we could be in trouble."

FE Week news in brief

SFA to have a rethink

A functional skills convention was held by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) last week.

A representative for the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) said at the convention they would be 'looking again' at the funding rates for functional skills.

The event was designed to support, prepare and equip providers for the delivery of functional skills in the 2012/13 academic year.

JML Dolman liquidated

JML Dolman has entered liquidation, putting hundreds of jobs and apprentices at risk.

The company, based in Wolverhampton, was criticised for its delivery of apprenticeships on a BBC Panorama programme entitled "The Great Apprentice Scandal".

The liquidation is being handled by the Birmingham office of Leonard Curtis Business Solutions.

SFA satisfaction survey

The Skills Funding Agency has launched its second annual 'College and Training Organisation Survey'.

The questionnaire looks at how effective the Agency has been in improving the way it operates and communicates with the sector.

The results of the first survey, published last September, found that 60 per cent of respondents thought the SFA had not made good progress in reducing bureaucracy in the sector.

Give us a break...

This is our last edition for the 2011/12 academic year.

We will be back for another amazing year on Monday, September 10.

In the meantime you can read what some of the sector leaders think about our first year on pages 10 and 11.

Providers' management fees to be audited

Nick Summers
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Lead providers who subcontract will need to provide a report next year that proves they are not taking too much in management fees, according to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

"(Each provider) must provide a report from its external auditors at the end of the contract year that provides assurance that the funding that it has retained is no more than is required to cover the actual costs directly incurred in managing its subcontractors," the SFA website said.

The clause forms part of the main terms and conditions for provider agreements in 2012/13.

Geoff Russell, chief executive of the SFA, told *FE Week*: "I'm asking the prime contractor to do two things. Demonstrate to me you have

the processes and the controls to be able to properly oversee a subcontract - which is going to discourage people from doing it quickly - and that the only fee you're charging is what you incur by way of direct costs."

Mr Russell said the SFA was still working on the details of the new clause, and would be considering small providers who either used reporting accountants or were not audited.

"There's no sense going crazy over someone who's subcontracting £10,000," he said.

RSM Tenon, a leading audit firm, said they had a meeting with the SFA to discuss the changes two weeks ago.

Chris Mantel, director for audit and advisory services at RSM Tenon, told *FE Week*: "I believe there are more questions than answers at present.

"Clear guidance will be required by the SFA to ensure a consistent approach is

adopted across the sector and, given the topic, I don't believe that there is a simple solution, especially in an environment of freedom and flexibility."

One subcontractor told *FE Week* in June that the management fees used by some lead providers were a "rip off".

Sally Garbett, an independent consultant and trainer for Read On Publications said: "One of my local FE colleges has nearly £5 million for 16 to 18 apprentices.

"They hiked their management fees from 20 to 30 per cent this year and will now retain £1.9 million of the 16 to 18 apprenticeship funding for a management fee.

"I find it hard to think that any admin operation can cost £1.9 million and I know that the advice and support they provide amounts to little more than quarterly visits and administrative monitoring."

Exam reform would stop ‘race to the bottom’, say MPs

Warwick Mansell

@WarwickMansell

A radical shake-up of the qualifications system for 15 to 19-year-olds in England has been proposed by an influential cross-party committee of backbench MPs.

The Education Select Committee concluded a near year-long investigation that focused on GCSEs and A-levels with a recommendation that exam boards lose the right to set their own syllabuses for each subject.

Instead, each board would bid for a contract with the government to design, in most subjects, a single syllabus or specification, against which all boards would then set questions.

The move would be designed to stop a “race to the bottom”, whereby the boards competed to offer “easier” versions of a particular exam course, which would then prove attractive to schools and colleges which were desperate to raise results.

Graham Stuart, Conservative MP for Beverley and Holderness who is the committee’s chair, said: “The public have lost confidence in exam standards and this needs to be put right. We’ve got to stop the dumbing-down of the

courses that young people sit and stop exam boards competing on how ‘accessible’ their syllabuses are.

“We believe that the best reform would be the creation of national syllabuses. There could be a competition...to decide which exam board would design the syllabus for a particular subject which would then be accredited by the regulator, Ofqual.

“After that, any board could set an exam for that syllabus and compete on innovation, efficiency, service and support. Ofqual would ensure that the boards didn’t compete by making papers easier.”

The report, without giving specific examples, said the “incentives” of England’s accountability system could lead to boards offering “easier” courses.

It said: “In a world where schools are under pressure to achieve ever better exam grades, and exam boards measure their own performance by market share, there is an obvious inbuilt incentive for competing exam boards to provide syllabuses which make lesser demands of students.”

In evidence to the committee, the Department for Education (DfE) agreed, saying: “Competition seems to present significant risks

of awarding bodies producing more ‘accessible’ specifications.”

Jon Coles, a former director general at the DfE, hit out in evidence against a “culture in which it is seen to be acceptable [for boards] to say... ‘do this [exam] because it’s easier’”.

The report said some subjects could have more than one national syllabus: it gave the example of a choice of texts in English literature or periods in history.

The recommendation was the most significant change put forward in the committee’s 101-page report. However, it appears to be less revolutionary than that attributed last month to Michael Gove, the Education Secretary.

In proposals leaked to the Daily Mail, Mr Gove would re-introduce O-levels in a system in which the boards would compete for a single contract to both design courses and set questions in each subject. Mr Stuart reportedly described moving to this entirely new system by Christmas – a move linked to Mr Gove – as “reckless”.

Other concerns raised by the committee included cost – the average secondary school was listed as spending £85,000 on testing, although no figures were listed for colleges – perverse incentives, as teachers focused extra attention

on middle-ability children who are central to league tables, and the endorsement of textbooks by the boards.

The MPs also proposed the establishment of national subject committees for large GCSE and A-level subjects. Comprised of representatives of learned societies, subject associations, higher education and employers, these would scrutinise question papers and influence the design of syllabuses.

Joy Mercer, director of policy at the Association of Colleges, said: “The number of exam boards without doubt makes for a complex system, and the [once] promised reduction in cost per exam has never materialised.

“However, there must be proper consultation on what form and structure any replacement takes. AoC would expect colleges to be fully involved in any process that would see exams changing in the future. Our members teach one third of all the country’s A-level students each year and know full well what can work successfully and what does not.”

The Select Committee can only make recommendations to ministers, rather than formulate policy. The Government’s full proposals on the exams system and secondary national curriculum are expected by the summer break.

Traineeships to be piloted

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The deputy prime minister has revealed plans for a new pre-apprenticeship scheme that he called “traineeships”.

Nick Clegg, speaking at an event held by the Confederation of British Industry on youth unemployment, said the scheme would provide support for people leaving school with minimal work experience or qualifications.

It was a package of training and work experience to allow young people “to get the basic, necessary skills, with a recognised qualification at the end of it - an extra rung on the ladder to get you on your way to an apprenticeship or job”.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) told *FE Week* the scheme would be used to tackle “unacceptably high” levels of youth unemployment.

“We are already helping young people improve their skills through pre-employment training, by expanding the apprenticeships programme, introducing the access to apprenticeships scheme and by protecting funding for basic and intermediate learning for 19 to 24 year-olds,” a BIS spokesperson said.

“As part of that continuing work, we are looking at developing a new ‘traineeship’, an extended package of training and work experience that will enable young people to get the skills that they need to secure a place with an employer.”

Unionlearn warned that the scheme would need to be properly assessed to make sure employers did not exploit young people as cheap labour.

“Traineeships should be paid unless they are for a clearly limited period of work experience,” a spokesperson told *FE Week*.

“They must also not be allowed to replace



real jobs and existing work. The focus must be on developing the skills of the learner and all traineeships should lead to an apprenticeship, where possible.”

It is unclear whether the traineeship scheme will replace access to apprenticeships, the current programme designed to help young people aged 16 to 24 on to an apprenticeship.

David Harbourne, director of policy and research at the Edge Foundation, said: “What Mr Clegg is talking about is a programme below level 2; a pre-apprenticeship programme.

“This obviously isn’t a new idea. But one problem with all such programmes is that some of the people most likely to benefit live chaotic lives.

“This can lead to non-completion rates that are higher than politicians and their civil servants are prepared to accept, especially if there is a strict time limit for completing the programme.”

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) have long campaigned for a form of preparatory training for apprentices. “The need for it has grown more urgent over recent months because the access to apprenticeships programme has only been moderately successful and because employers are now raising the bar for full apprenticeship entry requirements,” an AELP spokesperson told *FE Week*.

TRIBAL

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Geoff Russell

Nick Linford, managing editor of FE Week, talks to the retiring CEO of the Skills Funding Agency



What has been your greatest achievement at the SFA?

The biggest thrill for me and the greatest intellectual high is to be able to see one of your ideas implemented - and find that it works. The shift to outcomes, and how I wanted to introduce more competition around price, the simplifications in the sector, these were all very complicated ideas.

But these policies are a long way from implementation. Are you disappointed?

Stick around. We will be publishing shortly the document with the guidance that will put the meat on the very bare bones that we've put out. We've still got to work with the existing funding system, but the year after we'll start moving money, both in-year and annually, to bias it towards people who deliver outcomes.

What will job outcomes achieve?

The first one is - all things being equal between providers - the one that delivers outcomes more effectively will be more likely to get money. It doesn't mean to say the other provider will get nothing, but over time the ones that are better at delivering outcomes will attract more funding.

The second thing is we'll move it to - all things being equal between providers - the one who has the highest quality. This will motivate people to not just bump along the bottom at the minimum levels.

The third thing - and this is a little tougher, if you're a private provider - if you invest more of your profits back into your business you'll be more likely to get money from us.

How would that work? If you're a private provider taking out large dividends, could it affect the size of your contract?

I have nothing against taking dividends and nothing against making a reasonable return. But in a system where you pay one price for everything, by definition you're going to be overpaying in some cases and underpaying in others.

Our system doesn't take account for the economies of scale, and you know what can happen when you benefit from the economies of scale.

So one way of dealing with this is to say to people, you should make sure that you're investing enough in your quality and in your facilities.

The other way is to move away from a model that says we will pay this amount for that qualification and move towards saying how much would you be willing to do this for?

Do you think there's a chance any FE colleges might go to the wall?

We've threatened to do it twice. We wrote

letters to two colleges in December saying give us a plan that persuades us in a month, or we're going to put your funding up for auction.

The SFA said that wasn't the case . . .

Well it's because the colleges came back in a month with some rather good plans.

Our intervention strategy makes very clear that you get a notice of concern and then you get a notice of withdrawal of funding. After that, if it doesn't work out, we will auction your funding.

Are high prime provider management fees an issue for you?

I'm asking the primes to do two things. Demonstrate that they have the processes and the controls to be able to properly oversee a subcontract - which is going to discourage people from doing it quickly - and show me that the only fee you're charging is what you incur by way of direct costs.

Subcontracting plays an important role. But what I don't want is for it to become permanent, unless both the prime and the subcontractor are happy with that relationship . . . that they're each adding

something that neither wishes to get into, and they're doing it for a reasonable fee that isn't basically to give someone a business of selling SFA contracts and keeping a slice.

What's next? Can we expect Mr Russell CBE?

I think it's highly unlikely that I will have any letters after his name.

So what will you be doing next?

I'm retiring.

But you've retired before

I'm only 54, so I'm not quite dead. But equally, as Steve Jobs said, there's no point being the richest man in the cemetery. It's about recognising that there's more to life than paid employment.

However, if as before someone called me and said 'here's something really interesting to do', then I might consider it.

Final thoughts on you time at the top?

This has been one of the most difficult and challenging things that I have ever done in my life, but it's also been fantastic. FE is amazing and it's been a pleasure that people have been willing to share it with me. Finally, I think I'm pretty safe in saying that a lot of the things that we've talked about today, that I and others wanted to have happen, will happen.

Will you still have an interest in FE?

Yes, that's why you have to send me a copy of your rag every week, that's the best way I'll find out what's going on, won't I!



FE Week profile

Denise Brown-Sackey ~ her story

Nick Summers

@NicholasSummers

The principal of Newham

College talks to *FE Week*

Denise Brown-Sackey describes further education as being in a constant state of flux and change. It's why, as a natural survivor and "pretty fearless" leader, she's the ideal principal for Newham College.

From the age of three, Denise grew up in local authority care. The experience gave her strength and an adaptability that is still with her to this day.

"I would see myself as being a care thriver," she says.

"It was possibly traumatic at the time, but I built a resilience that enabled me to turn it into an experience."

Denise and her sister were the "core" of a children's home for 15 years. "You don't become attached too easily," she says.

"You develop skills to communicate with people, to get on with people and to do it in a way that you don't become overly attached.

"I think that's an important survival technique, particularly in a career, because if you become attached to a particular way of doing something or a particular idea, and it doesn't work out, it can crush you."

When I ask if she was academic at school, Denise says it was difficult to know. Her upbringing meant she had little emotional support or way of comparing her achievements.

"Expectations were zero," she says.

"You go to school because you have to. There wasn't any real expectation of achievement and by and large, lived up to that."

However, Denise was bright and very able. She came out with good O-levels, far higher than the national average for children in care. It led to an ordinary national diploma in catering management at Tameside College of Technology, later opening up a route into higher education at Leeds Polytechnic.

But Denise says she often struggled to gain recognition for her academic ability. At the time social workers were keen to enrol care leavers on vocational courses because they thought it would improve their chances of finding a job.

"I applied to do dietetics at university and then applied to do a higher vocational qualification in hotel and catering management," she explains.

"My college tutor at the time said, well I'm not going to give you a very supportive reference for dietetics, because I don't think it's for you, but you will get a glowing reference for the other one. Sure enough I got on the course which I got a glowing reference for."

Denise recalls what it was like to move to Leeds, but I'm surprised by her response. Living in a children's home, she says with a chuckle, wasn't too dissimilar to student halls of residence.

"I seemed to have gone from a small

children's home to a big children's home! There were corridors of separate doors with people who lived in them and whom I interacted with, but they weren't family. In that sense, it wasn't hugely different."

Although Denise rarely felt challenged at university, it was an "absolutely essential" part of her life. Every young person, she says, should experience being away from home before they're fully independent.

Within the first six months of leaving university she had moved to London and secured her first management job in contract catering. Alongside her job she took a postgraduate diploma in management studies at Kingston University, hoping - she says with a snigger - that she would become a "international fantastic super-duper head-hunted hotel entrepreneur manager".

However, Denise wasn't satisfied with her line of work. It was only after she stumbled across a recruitment poster for volunteer teachers that she finally found her true calling.

"I hadn't really valued education. I thought school was great, I thought it was great fun, and that's because I never really struggled to get the basics. So to discover there were adults older than me who couldn't read was amazing."

Denise recalls, smiling from ear to ear, how elderly women from the Caribbean would attend with a Bible, incredibly keen to learn. Unfortunately figuring out what they had learned was quite tough, because they had memorised almost every psalm on every page.

"They would be following it with their finger and reading it off par, so you would slow down and say 'okay, what does this word say?' They would reply 'oh me no know, let me carry on reading', and before you knew it they were

"If you invert a pyramid and stand it on its head, that's what it feels like"

back into their flow."

Keen to leave her old job behind, Denise began teaching vocational courses and adult literacy courses part-time. After a couple of years she took a job as a grade one lecturer, with an additional role as head of adult education centre.

But that wasn't enough. Denise enrolled on a part-time Master's degree at Bournemouth University, and became pregnant with her first child in the second year. Frequently travelling back and forth by train, it was a constant balancing act during her mid-twenties.

"I loved it and I suppose my partner at the time was the same. We were both high energy people. I look back now, and where I am in my life now, and realise that if you're not going to do it at 25 you're never going to do it. You're not going to have that level of energy, that drive,



that ability to have 10 plates in the air and keep them all spinning. Because if you do stop and think about it, you wouldn't do it."

During her Master's degree Denise found a new job as a grade 2 lecturer at Newham College. Appointed as a multi-ethnic education adviser by Dame Ruth Silver, she was tasked with increasing and broadening participation in the college.

"The challenge was to break down internal barriers which were stopping ethnic minority students being recruited and external barriers which stopped them applying to the college," she says.

"Twenty-five years on, the balance has completely reversed. Now it is absolutely reflective of the local community."

Denise was frequently promoted at the college, never staying in the same position for more than 18 months. While she says she had "a huge attachment" to the organisation, it didn't stop her moving to Havering College as vice principal 14 years later.

"It was the lack of opportunity at the next level that took me away, I suppose that indicates I was always ambitious, because I wasn't ready or prepared to sit as a director - I wanted to go and be a vice principal and the opportunity wasn't at Newham College" she says.

Working at Havering College for two years gave Denise a fresh batch of confidence. It was

the sudden realisation that she could change the college not because people liked her - or had worked with her for more than a decade - but because she was very good at her job.

Two years later Denise moved back to Newham College as deputy principal. The experience was like "going home", but with one key difference: colleagues could clearly see how far she had grown.

"It was instant. I think they had respect for what I had done at Havering but also respect because they had felt the difference when I wasn't there."

Denise became principal in 2010. She says the sense of responsibility, more than anything else, was the greatest shock.

"If you invert a pyramid and stand it on its head, that's what it feels like. You're at the bottom, holding up this huge organisation and, if it can, everything will be delegated to you because people want your input into everything, your attention. That's great, in fact it's really fantastic, but you're only one person and they are many!"

Clearly she doesn't mind. Denise is passionate about the future and what Newham College continues to achieve.

"We will find a course that's right for you. We're not looking at your CV; we're looking at where you want to go and how we can help you get there. That's what we're about."

FE Week Experts



In October, institutions and other stakeholders were asked for their views on options for significant changes to the way 16-19 education and training is funded. From the wide-ranging responses received (almost 700) the majority agreed with the overarching principles of simplification of the 16-19 funding formula proposed in the consultation document. But many were concerned about the impact of changes to funding on their institution.

This week, as part of a number of announcements on post-16 reforms, the Secretary of State confirmed that for 2013/14 a fairer, simpler and more transparent funding system will be introduced to support the raising of the participation age and the introduction of study programmes for young people.

I am sure schools, colleges and training providers are still contemplating the detail of the package of announcements, and I'll say more later about what the Education Funding Agency (EFA) will be doing over the coming months to make sure you are informed and prepared for the changes ahead. But the fact is that the current system – with wide variations in the funding young people doing similar types of learning attract – was in need of review and reform. The changes to the funding system are designed to make the system fairer and simpler and in particular to support all young people equitably so that they have the best chance of going to higher education, getting good jobs and succeeding in life.

The key points from the funding announcement include:

- Under the new system institutions will attract a standard rate of funding for each student weighted for necessary course costs, retention and with additional funding for those at a disadvantage, all adjusted for area costs;
- The reforms will free up institutions to provide more demanding programmes that meet the individual needs of young people currently not well served – especially those on some vocational courses, which are not well-regarded by employers;
- The new system will be significantly simpler and will remove some of the data and audit systems required to feed the formula;

A new era of 16-19 and adult FE funding

- It will free up schools, colleges and other providers so that they can deliver innovative and flexible programmes of study, including non-qualification bearing activities such as work experience; and
- By removing success rates from the formula, we are removing perverse incentives and freeing schools and colleges up to put students on courses that will stretch them to their full potential.

In response to the views expressed in the consultation, protections have been put in place so that, for at least three years, no provider will lose any programme funding as a result of these changes. During those three years A-levels will be reviewed, and we will need to review funding for large academic and vocational programmes in light of this and as part of the next spending review.

But what of the more immediate future? What happens next and how can you get involved and find out more?

Ministers are establishing a working group to help ensure that these reforms work in the best interests of all young people, with representatives from across the sector invited to participate and give the views of their colleagues. In addition, the EFA will be holding a series of briefings across the country from autumn so that all our customers understand how the new system will work and to answer their outstanding questions.

But we understand that it's not just about the process, it's about what this means for your funding in the years ahead. We will therefore be providing you with 'shadow allocations' to see what your current (2012/13) funding allocation would have been if calculated on the basis of the new 16-19 funding formula.

The post-16 reforms represent a significant change for us all. Our aim at the EFA is to make the transition as smooth as possible and to work with 16-19 providers to give you as complete a picture as we can about what you can expect in 2013/14 and beyond.

- Information about the 16-19 funding formula review is available on the DfE website at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/a00210682/funding-formula-review>
- Programmes of Study at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes>
- Raising the Participation Age at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/rpa/a00210946/consultation-responses>
- For any queries about the new 16-19 funding system or the review not answered by information on this site, please email FundingFormulaReview.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk

Peter Lauener, chief executive of the Education Funding Agency

It will come as no surprise to you when I say funding agencies embark on a complete reworking of their funding rules only with trepidation.

Introducing a new funding system for the further education sector was never going to be an easy task. As I take up my new job as interim chief executive of Skills Funding it feels, more than ever, that the time is right to move on from a complex system that's creaking from the multiple patches we've applied to accommodate new policy over the years.

My ambition is clear: to reduce unnecessary funding complexity and allow colleges and training organisations flexibility so that they can respond to the needs of learners, employers and communities. I want to remove bureaucratic burdens and central control so the sector can maximise its contribution to economic recovery. For without doubt, it is colleges and training organisations that are in the best possible place to identify, interpret and respond to the needs of learners when resources are at a premium. It's about value, but it's also about quality, getting the best possible outcome for the learner with the resources available.

So a new single streamlined funding system will replace the previous multiple systems. Simplified funding rates will reduce the number from thousands to around 60; a single earnings methodology will eliminate the risks and complexities of differences between colleges and other training organisations; and a switch from guided learning hours to credits will reduce audit complexity.

"I am determined that we will work more closely with the sector, ask the right questions, listen better and respond to what you tell us"

For the first time, in response to your comments about our guidance documents, we have produced a single document that sets out the Funding Rules and evidence requirements for the 2012/13 funding year. You will see we have – quite deliberately – exchanged funding guidance for funding rules. Because we want to be really clear, remove ambiguity and eradicate unhelpful phrases such as 'providers might' or 'providers will decide' and exchange these for 'providers must'. We have done away with the additional guidance notes during the year and the 'forest' of supporting documents. I hope



that you can see a new language and approach that are designed to save time in interpreting guidance at the point of delivery and at audit.

But more important than the facts of a new funding system to me is the way we have worked together over the last year to develop the new system. The Agency has been supported, challenged and advised by a sector-led Technical Advisory Group, chaired by David Lawrence from Easton College. I am determined that we will work more closely with the sector, ask the right questions, listen better and respond to what you tell us. And when the time for talking is over, we will act with clarity and confidence because we will have a position the sector believes in.

Shadow working of the funding system has already begun and colleges and training organisations are putting in a great deal of time and effort testing and trialling the new arrangements. Their feedback will be invaluable in helping us refine the system and in checking it is operating smoothly. It is this engagement that will ensure that the final system is fit for purpose. We are road-testing something new and one aspect of the system is the rates that we have set for testing purposes. At the end of the summer we will take stock of the feedback and issues raised before finalising the number and value of rates in January 2013.

We have now put out our second Provider Survey, building on last year's exercise, and we need feedback through this channel on how well you think the Agency is performing. You can also post comment on Twitter using the hash tag #fedebate.

I cannot promise we will always do exactly what you would like but what I will say is that through our dialogue we will foster a mutual understanding that gives us all a stronger voice and tells the story of the difference further education and skills makes to economic and social renewal.

I believe FE is truly remarkable and our reputation goes before us. Let's use the freedom and flexibility of a new funding era to make skills work for everyone.

Kim Thorneywork, interim chief executive of the Skills Funding Agency

FE Week Experts

Future of FE must be an enterprising one

The news of Education Secretary Michael Gove's proposals for reforming the qualification system has brought into sharp focus the extent to which education needs to change to equip the workforce of the future.

The Education Secretary is right to call for a curriculum that "prepares all children for success at 16 and beyond, by broadening what is taught in our schools and in improving how it is assessed". Would industry see the O-level and CSE curriculum of the seventies as containing the breadth needed to support that ambition? The Gazelle Colleges Group asked that question at a House of Commons symposium with industry representatives last week.

The event, designed to help develop our vision for an "entrepreneurial college of the future" and based on our recent Enterprising Futures report, was hosted by Neil Carmichael MP of the Education Select Committee. Panellists included: Stephen Uden, head of citizenship at Microsoft; Penny Power, founder of Ecademy; James Groves, head of education, Policy Exchange; Stella Mbubaegbu CBE, principal, Highbury College Portsmouth; and David Wilson, deputy director of policy and strategy, enterprise directorate, BIS. The debate was chaired by Michael Hayman, co-founder of Seven Hills and StartUp Britain.

The overarching view? The current further education system as it is cannot meet the needs of a changing economy. Industry, however, is not universally in search of the creative, enterprising people that the Gazelle

report suggests is the case.

The artisanal, networking and entrepreneurial worlds described in the report are growing in global employment influence, but the corporate world dominates, and the larger companies will continue, for a time at least, to recruit individuals with only the specialist skills required for corporate success. Colleges therefore need to create breadth but not at the expense of technical excellence.

Lara Morgan, founder of Company Shortcuts and Gazelle entrepreneur representative, suggested that there is a need for the education system to be more "uncomfortable", pushing people outside their comfort zone. She said: "There is a missed opportunity. We need to encourage the willingness to be competitive, to want to win and to be proud of making money and building wealth and success. We need to teach bravery. We need to allow students to build their own self confidence".

Stephen Uden from Microsoft confirmed that it is those who have the agility to adapt their skills that will be the employees that succeed and thrive.

Stella Mbubaegbu, CBE, principal and chief executive of Highbury College, Portsmouth, was more radical in her call for a "paradigm shift" in further education.

She said: "There is failure in the wider system and this is affecting our young people. We need learning that develops an entrepreneurial mindset through enterprising approaches within an entrepreneurial

environment.

If we're talking about successful outcomes for education and training, we would like government to recognise this, develop supportive policies, not just enterprise initiatives and come with us on the journey."

If we are to advance an argument for recognisable entrepreneurial colleges in the UK we need a louder voice than just the Gazelle Principals Group.

In recruiting some outstanding entrepreneurs to the Gazelle movement we have begun to create a lobby for change that is respected and valued in the corporate environment.

We also need to advance the debate with the leaders of industry. The constant rejection of young people emerging from the education system on the basis of their lack of initiative, discipline, creativity and basic skills by employers can only be addressed if those employers work with us to define the experience needed to create that output.

There were no advocates at the symposium for an O-level curriculum or indeed for a traditional teaching paradigm that segregated students and measured success in qualification output. There was therefore a meeting of minds around the need for new qualifications and new learning models that could better address the changing needs of industry, and the changing expectations of young people in particular. The Gazelle Colleges Group, representing 19 colleges at the event, resolved to increase dialogue with industry at every level. In the same



way that we have brought entrepreneurs and education leaders together to champion entrepreneurship as a strategic driver for change, we need now to bring industry at its most senior level into a similar strategic debate.

Industry must be empowered by our colleges to engage proactively in learning design and curriculum delivery. It needs to become an advocate for a new type of college and part of its architecture.

Fintan Donohue, CEO of Gazelle and principal of North Hertfordshire College

FE Week advertorial

Technology improves assessment quality

The benefits of using technology for assessment are being experienced by hundreds of learning providers around the country. However compared to the wider use of technology today there is still a relatively small proportion of FE learners completing qualifications through tools such as e-Portfolios.

"We estimate there is only 25% of learners currently being assessed through an e-Portfolio", says Susanna Lawson, director at OneFile. Further education is therefore trailing behind the times with technology as Ofcom statistics show 79% of the UK population 16 and over use the internet, with 44% accessing it through smartphones.

So what are the benefits of using e-Portfolios? Susanna (Lawson) says, "OneFile customers experience an improved quality of assessment through the auditable nature of an e-Portfolio as well as multiple logistical efficiencies with the assessment portfolio accessible through a secure login from any device with the internet". With the Skills Funding Agency finally clarifying their position on the acceptance of electronic confirmation and

signatures in their Funding Rules for 2012/13, it is expected the use of e-Portfolios for assessment will increase dramatically over the next 12 months.

"We pride ourselves on our support, service and commitment to innovation"

With the reduction of the Ofsted inspection notice period to 2 days the emphasis on the quality systems in place and ready for inspection has increased. Ofsted have described OneFile as an, "extremely effective assessment portfolio", Asset Training Ofsted Report, and the effective use of OneFile has assisted centres in receiving Outstanding Ofsted reports. "The auditable nature of our software is efficient at both SFA audits and Ofsted inspections as assessments are collated in a central, accessible location meaning in a matter of seconds reports can

be viewed on all assessment information", Susanna Lawson.

So what makes OneFile special? OneFile is the first assessment e-Portfolio perfect for both classroom and work-based qualifications. The database of qualifications for OneFile is extensive with QCFs, BTECs, NVQs and all parts of an apprenticeship framework available and an estimated 50,000 learners will enrol on the software in 2012.

New developments such as the innovative mobile application OneFile Nomad, an offline assessment tool for work-based learning, demonstrate OneFile is dedicated to maximising the efficiencies of bringing technology into the assessment process.

Director Susanna Lawson says, "we pride ourselves on our support, service and commitment to innovation, our customer's love the instinctive usability of our software combined with the fact OneFile has become an all-in-one assessment solution". For more information contact OneFile on info@onefile.co.uk, 0161 918 6768 or visit the OneFile stand at FE Weekend on Friday 13th July 2012.



FE Week Experts

The LGA report is, to put it politely, inadequate



“Local authorities have much to offer the learning and skills system if they step back from attempting to micro-manage provision”

The publication of the recent Local Government Association (LGA) report on a so-called “skills mismatch” in further education is deeply disappointing.

It represents a backward step to outdated and discredited approaches to labour market planning and threatens to undermine moves towards a more fruitful strategic co-operation between colleges and local authorities that we in the 157 Group have been seeking to encourage. If local authorities seriously think that it is practicable to manage the supply of courses

on the basis of incomplete and imperfect statistics about jobs and vacancies they will find themselves seriously out of step with current thinking in vocational education.

The links between education and employment are complex and the public debate is not well served by oversimplifying them. In relation to jobs, for example, one needs to take into account opportunities for self employment as well as advertised vacancies; to take account of informal as well as formal channels of recruitment and reflect the fact that when em-

ployers recruit they do not always select using those qualifications that observers think that they should. Occupations differ in the extent to which they train and promote in house, and the extent to which they recruit young people rather than adults.

In relation to vocational education for young people, we need to remember that it is more than training in a narrow set of skills for current jobs. It is concerned to prepare them for a lifetime as citizens as well as employees; for a world in which they are likely to change jobs several times and where they will need regularly to update their skills; and as countless opinion surveys repeat “soft skills” such as attitude to work, adaptability and the willingness to learn are far more important to employers than specific skills or knowledge.

In the light of these complexities it is sad that the LGA report continues to churn out tired stereotypes on the basis of highly imperfect data – by their own admission about two thirds of their qualifications data cannot be neatly fitted into a sectoral analysis of occupations.

Those in further education know, for example, that hairdressing offers lots of opportunities for self employment and part-time work, and provides transferable skills that are valued in many other contexts, such as reception

and call centre businesses. It is no surprise to anyone who knows more than just statistics that industry doesn’t recruit health and safety officers from 17-year-olds with shiny new certificates; and it doesn’t need much research to find out that there are more vacancies per qualified individual in London than in the North East.

Local authorities have much to offer the learning and skills system if they step back from attempting to micro-manage provision. They have important roles in promoting economic development, in leading social regeneration and in helping shape and support communities. Working with employers and others in LEPs they have the potential to catalyse growth in their locality.

If they act as strategic partners to colleges sharing their aspirations and knowledge, and aligning their resources with those of the sector they will find that colleges are only too ready to respond; but if they hark back to the days when town halls tried to dictate course planning they will condemn themselves to sitting on the sidelines as decisions are taken elsewhere.

*Lynne Sedgmore
executive director of the 157 Group*

Colleges must not milk the system

Should FE colleges be allowed to charge their sub-contractors “management fees”? That is charging external education providers for passing business their way if they are unable to fulfil a contract themselves.

For instance, a business needs to train new staff members in a certain skill, and seeks their local FE college for assistance. Unfortunately the college offers no such course, but knows of another local educator – or sub-contractor – who can do the job.

Here’s the rub though: there are documented cases of colleges charging sub-contractors as much as 50 per cent of the cost of the actual training merely for passing the business their way. For many reasons this is wrong.

The fact that they even charge a “passer’s fee” is, in the Forum’s view at least, a contentious issue. If they can’t provide the training themselves, then should what is essentially a public sector organisation be allowed to indulge in such shameless profiteering at the expense of private sector business? For it is small firms who ultimately pick up the tab as naturally costs are passed on.

Colleges would no doubt argue that it’s a justifiable revenue generator given the austere times, when no doubt they are looking at all ways to bridge gaps caused by Government cuts.

Perhaps the real focus therefore, should be on the actual prices the FE colleges are charging – or allowed to charge. With prices as high as 50 per cent, some colleges are, frankly, adopting a blatant rip-off mentality as and when they can.

So what can be done about it?

“FE colleges should not be making huge profits at the expense of sub-contractors”

The Skills Funding Agency does not impose a maximum percentage that the colleges can charge, but suggests it should not exceed 15 per cent. Even that’s generous for merely passing on someone’s details, most right-thinking people surely would agree.

The problem lies with the power of the colleges to simply do as they please. There is nothing to govern their behaviour that allows them to lord it over sub-contractors increasingly desperate for work.

This essentially goes against the fundamental practice of sub-contracting which should be a

collaboration of equals – not one bossing the other about thanks to financial clout.

Whilst this practice might happen to a degree in certain private sector industries, there really is no place for it in the public sector.

Quite simply FE colleges should not be making huge profits at the expense of sub-contractors or businesses, the latter of whom are parting with money in good faith so that their staff are trained to the best possible standard.

If colleges are greedily taking bigger, and bigger slices of the pie then that has to impact on the overall quality of the training.

We would advise businesses to clarify with training providers exactly who will be carrying out the training they are paying for.

Most businesses would naturally assume that if they pay a college for training then it will be the college who does the work, not simply passing it to a sub-contractor as a means to make a quick buck via a crude passer’s fee. Cutting out the middle man usually tends to save money.

It could be that FE colleges are finding themselves short of money in the current climate with government reining in spending, but it is certainly not for them to be milking the system to make a quick buck at the expense of



other providers and ultimately the businesses paying for the training.

It’s time that we had guidelines that govern what the colleges can charge.

*Robert Downes, policy advisor for
Forum of Private Business*

FE Week Experts

During a recession it would make more sense for people to be supported to learn new skills in further education than paid to look for jobs that don't exist. That is the simple headline message of a new report prepared by the 157 Group to be published this week.

Colleges maintain that there are many young people, and older people too, who would benefit from the opportunity to retrain or increase their qualifications but are prevented from doing so by the lack of maintenance support.

Colleges contribute in several ways to tackling unemployment and could do more were the right policies in place. The most obvious way they contribute is in providing a constructive alternative to staying at home on benefits or fruitless job search. Further education courses can equip people with the skills the economy will need when the upturn comes, to the benefit of both individuals and employers.

For many, however, financial support is key. The latest figures on participation for 16 to 18-year-olds show that the percentage in education and training has fallen for the first time in a decade; and that it is concentrated among those groups hit by the loss of EMAs.

For adults the government's impact assessment shows that many older learners will feel unable to continue if grant support for fees is

Promote FE to tackle unemployment

"It would make sense to give Job Seeker's Allowance claimants the option of a learning loan"

replaced by loans. A first policy priority has to be to stop participation falling further.

But there are options for participation to grow. There is a marked lack of maintenance support available for those wanting to undertake full time FE compared with the billions spent on full time HE.

It ought to be possible to introduce a system of grants and loans on the same lines as for undergraduates that would, in part, be paid for by savings on Job Seeker's Allowance and other benefits. It would make sense to give JSA claimants the option of a learning loan, rather than having a learning programme



truncated by the vagaries of the 16-hour rule. It would be good if self improvement through FE were actively encouraged rather than grudgingly conceded.

It is not, however, simply a question of money. The other major way FE contributes to tackling unemployment is by helping firms remain competitive and the report suggests colleges could do more were they not restricted in what they can offer. Firms need support with business problems and do not always want qualifications. Colleges need to be able to offer those parts of courses that employers want, not just that which is on a government approved list.

This latter point is picked up by John Crid-

land, director general of the CBI, in a foreword commending the report. "Now, the focus must be on ensuring colleges are freed up to work with businesses at the local level" he says, a point echoed by Paula Whittle, Principal of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College who leads on unemployment for the 157 Group saying "We need funding flexibility and the promotion of the full range of FE programmes in the same way as government has actively promoted apprenticeships".

If business and colleges are pulling in the same direction it is hard to see how government can resist.

Mick Fletcher is an FE consultant and author of the 157 Group Policy Paper

Childcare: why high-quality training pays off



David Cameron has created a National Childcare Commission in the wake of Professor Cathy Nutbrown's review of qualifications for the Early Years workforce. Nutbrown wants tougher entry requirements, starting at level 3, to raise the quality and status of childcare workers. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Truss MP, in a recent report for the think tank CentreForum, calls for complete deregulation and a stripping away of qualifications she insists are unnecessary.

How does this sit alongside Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's latest pledge to ensure free childcare places for an additional 260,000 of the most disadvantaged two-year-olds by 2014? He

says he wants qualified staff to do the job. So, how do colleges and other providers go about training the army of staff needed within two years? Or will Truss's arguments win out?

The challenge for the new commission will be to ensure that cutting costs does not take precedence over the urgent need to improve the quality of childcare – a difficult task given the state of the economy. But decades of research evidence tell us that cost-cutting is a false economy and argues persuasively for rigorous high-quality initial training and continuous professional development.

A meta-analysis of international research, by the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, showed conclusively that training, staff ratios and group size "have a direct impact on the ability of staff to provide sensitive, responsive care for children." No research since that report in 2002 has contradicted this, as the Nutbrown review shows. Only competency-based training can provide childcare staff with the necessary skills and supportive theory.

A deeper argument emerges repeatedly in inspection reports on best providers. The Thomas Coram report echoes this: "In provision with high staff-child ratios, staff are more likely to be well qualified, have access to training, be better paid, and be less likely to leave their jobs. In high quality settings, staff spend more time planning how to deliver the curriculum, keep

more effective records on the children in their care, and communicate more effectively with parents."

In other words, with high quality training and small childcare groups, there is a greater tendency towards self improvement and, therefore, greater demand from parents. We know too from similar studies that such children are healthier and are more likely to find sustainable employment when older. This makes a strong business case: such spending is an investment not a cost.

The Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE) has been the major provider of high quality qualifications in the children's sector for 67 years, ever since it wrote the first national Nursery Education Board (NNEB) qualification in 1945. It is committed to providing quality and rigorously monitors the standards of all training providers who offer its qualifications.

Children deserve a good start and most experts agree with Professor Nutbrown that training should last a minimum of 2 years and be at level 3 (equivalent to A-level standard). However, this means costs rise. It also reduces access to childcare because some potential recruits to the workforce won't commit time to training before they start to earn.

Professor Nutbrown's call for all childcare trainees to have level 2 (GCSE-equivalent)

English and mathematics before they start training will further reduce the number of recruits. It is argued that a way to overcome this is to allow professional early years workers to take responsibility for larger groups. But I would urge caution here; the evidence shows young children gain from individual attention to a degree not possible if staff work with large numbers of children.

The Nutbrown's report raises another issue. Young people who underachieve are often guided into childcare through poor careers advice at school. They need entry qualifications at levels 1 and 2 which allow them to work under supervision. If the entry grade is raised to level 3, this would remove the stepping stones these young people need. Equally, many adults who failed at school rediscover a love of learning through a level 1 childcare qualification. They gain self confidence and often progress to university. The entry level start therefore not only strengthens childcare provision but provides a springboard to other careers.

It is vital that this quality is not sacrificed in the interest of saving money and providing accessibility – or it will be a time bomb ticking for the next generation.

Richard Dorrance is chief executive of the Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE)

FE WEEK CELEBRATES 1st BIRTHDAY

The further education and skills sector has always needed a voice. Somewhere to analyse the latest policy proposals, and ask the difficult questions when high quality teaching and learning is threatened. That's why last summer I decided to launch a weekly newspaper and online website dedicated to covering the FE sector.

Over the last ten months the team at *FE Week* has investigated the most pressing issues in the sector, from short duration apprenticeships to falling Ofsted inspection grades. In each instance we've spent time talking to key stakeholders and listening to those who are most adversely affected.

The results have been overwhelming. The government has made countless U-turns on what we thought were immovable policies and consulted with the sector like never before. But life is never dull in the world of FE policy and implementation. FE loans are on the horizon, Ofsted are introducing a new inspection framework and two new 'simplified' funding systems for 16-19 and adult skills are being hotly debated.



The printed newspaper will be taking a break over the summer, although the website will continue to publish news. We'll also look to see where we can refocus our efforts and expand coverage like never before.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the newspaper throughout this academic year. Onwards and upwards!

*Nick Linford, managing editor
and founder of FE Week*



WE ASKED A FEW FE HEROES WHAT THEY THOUGHT...

“AN INVESTIGATE ANALYSIS OF WHAT’S GOING ON”

FE week has transformed media coverage of FE by creating an outlet for detailed information and real investigative analysis of what's going on under the surface of the sector. A sector champion such as *FE Week* has the capacity to build effective cross-sector campaigns. The pressure it has built up around apprenticeship quality has been fantastic; this power can be carried across other education policy areas such as the introduction of FE fees and loans, and to celebrate the huge impact that student voice has on quality, retention and student experience in those providers that do it best.

In the absence of *FE Week* over the summer, we have to remember that policymaking does not end and that a busy summer is often the rug that policy changes are swept under. NUS will be spending the summer building towards a national demonstration against the bleak future faced by students of all ages and at all levels and I'd hope that *FE Week* readers will be joining us on November 21.

*Toni Pearce
VP (FE) at the National Union of Students*



“IT HAS CREATED A REAL BUZZ AND FILLED A VOID”

Well done to *FE Week* on completing its first academic year. Set against a backdrop of dwindling coverage of FE issues in the wider media, it has created a real buzz and filled a void for news specifically for our sector. I hope it will continue to be a voice for the FE community and to report on the good news and success stories, as well as outlining the challenges and changes ahead. These have been manifold over the past 12 months and show no signs of abating in 2012/13. The sector will need to respond to the impact of planned changes to 16-19 funding and programmes of study, FE loans, and changes to the inspection framework, not to mention planned curriculum changes in A-levels and functional skills. Despite this sometimes overwhelming agenda and reductions in public funds, the FE sector is rising to the challenge of developing the nation's skills base to support the economic recovery. We hope colleges' efforts will be aided by a better dialogue with policymakers and fewer distractions from ministers. ASCL and its affiliated association, PPC, will continue to put weight behind these efforts and to support colleagues individually.

*Brian Lightman
general secretary of the ASCL*



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“PROVIDING DETAILED COVERAGE OF THE SECTOR”

With national media coverage of our sector becoming a distant memory, except when there is a scandal to report, *FE Week* has been a welcome addition to the debate surrounding FE and skills reform over the past 12 months. To borrow school governor parlance, it might be described as a “critical friend”, although it has arguably stretched the friendship a little too far on occasion!

But it is important to recognise the positive things about *FE Week*’s arrival, starting with the fact that it is filling a huge gap in providing detailed coverage of the sector and that launching a print publication of any kind in the current economic climate is brave.

The “*FE Week* Gets Technical” charts are an excellent innovation for those of us who sometimes only have a few minutes on a train to catch up on certain developments, while it is encouraging to see the space given over to stakeholders to offer their views on current issues.

Independent providers are also welcoming that their part of the sector is receiving regular coverage and, surprise, surprise, this means that they have started advertising in *FE Week*.



It is ironic, though, that I am making this contribution to an “end of term” issue when the work-based learning community will carry on working with young apprentices and employers throughout the summer as we fight to get Britain out of recession.

I would like to see the paper develop more of its analytical side over the coming months, yet overall AELP is very happy to work with *FE Week* to see it grow and contribute to ongoing debates in the sector.

Graham Hoyle
chief executive of AELP

“POWERFUL INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM”

It’s been a busy year for the FE and Skills sector, but then which year hasn’t been busy? There are many contentious issues facing FE, but we need to remember we are also presented with opportunities to work together, to shape the future, and to create our destiny.

One of the differences this year is that we have had *FE Week* accompanying us on every step of the journey. It is not often that a publication makes its mark as quickly as *FE Week* has, but the sector has welcomed having its own expert journal and powerful investigative journalism focused on the critical issues, however uncomfortable that may be at times. Alongside well-written articles, *FE Week* has provided a much needed opportunity and forum for the sector’s own leaders to engage in real debate about the big issues we face on a weekly basis.

The focus for the next academic year has to be on teaching and learning – improving and maintaining the quality of what our learners experience, particularly in the classroom or work environment and demonstrating the really innovative ways in which the sector gets the best out of people.



I hope that *FE Week* will help provide a platform for highlighting and debating evidence about effective practice which will inform the new Commission on Adult Vocational Pedagogy. The challenge of youth unemployment will continue to be a major concern during 2012/13 – read our new policy paper which has just been published (see page 9).

I wish all your readers a well-earned summer break, and hope they return fresh and energetic for a new academic year.

Lynne Sedgmore
executive director of the 157 Group

“UNDOUBTEDLY, FE WEEK HAS FILLED A GAP”

For working people, who care about learning and training, there are big issues looming. The move to FE loans is a great worry. Surely it is inconceivable that employers will start asking their over-24 level 3 apprentices to fund their own training out of a loan. But what about others? The BIS research shows a very mixed and uncertain picture.

The likely appetite for learning among older workers could plummet. Women and BME working people are more likely to be put off. Of course there are also upsides too, such as the opportunity to borrow to pursue long-cherished ambitions, just like HE students. But there must be a major communications drive and a readiness to tackle emerging problem areas with additional help and to think again.

Nobody can be content when 20 per cent of apprentices are not even receiving the Statutory Minimum Wage and a similar number report not getting the minimum SASE compliant training. It is welcome that NAS and BIS are now tackling this with urgency. So is Unionlearn. We will be campaigning for better enforcement and will highlight any abuses we find.

Undoubtedly *FE Week* has filled a gap. But one aspect of the paper is slightly depressing.



The focus on technical issues, including micro adjustments to meet the funding formulae reflects, of course, the reality for colleges and other providers.

But I look forward to the day when *FE Week* carries just as many stories of imaginative, new provision; geared to meeting employment needs - enthusiastically supported by a new and more liberal funding regime with the active involvement of all social partners.

Tom Wilson
director of Unionlearn

“HAS THE FEEL OF A WELL ESTABLISHED NEWSPAPER”

Is this really only issue 36 of *FE Week*? It has the feel of a well-established newspaper that makes waves. It revealed inadequacies in apprenticeships that were at first denied by ministers and the National Apprenticeship Service and then, when the excuses ran out, acted on with moves to ban inadequate and unjustifiably short courses.

FE Week has its detractors as well as its admirers, but sets a high benchmark that it must maintain. I suggest three inter-related areas for critical attention in the coming year: leadership and governance, deregulation and financial survival – what people will do to keep their institutions going when faced with reduced funding.

Deregulation is sweeping through FE just when the full extent of damage from the failure to regulate banks and markets adequately is being exposed. Effective regulation should not be overbearing but supportive, nurturing effective leadership and governance at all levels.

However, to the current government, ideologically obsessed with “small government”, almost any level of regulation is anathema.

The consequent failure to be watchful resulted in the abuses and financial mismanagement of pockets of apprenticeship provision exposed by *FE Week*.



We’ve been here before. Almost 20 years ago, after college incorporation, politicians started with denials and were then forced to act on growing scandals that gave FE such a lasting bad reputation and led to the very regulations the Coalition Government is busy dismantling.

With less regulation, we need a vigilant fourth estate (*FE Week*) to keep close scrutiny on what institutions are doing to survive.

Ian Nash
former editor of *FE Focus*

FE Week gets technical

Below are the slides from Nick Linford's webinar, in partnership with Tribal, which summarised the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) progress on funding formula reform. Delegates answered a survey after the webinar, and only seven out of 196 thought that the planned rates banding was better than a funding rate (e.g. £44 unweighted) per QCF credit. Rumour is that the SFA are now considering a pound per credit rate.

1

SFA funding formula reform - a progress update

2nd July 2012
Nick Linford



In partnership with

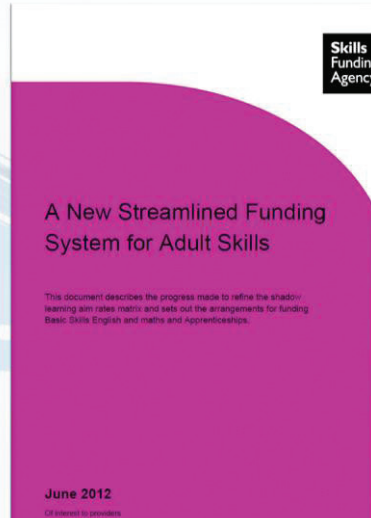
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FE Week

Lsect
Learning & skills ~ events, consultancy and training

2

New 19+ 'simple' and 'streamlined' funding



Skills Funding Agency

- First edition published in October
- Second edition published February
- Third edition published June
- Lots of 'modelling' still to do
- Final decision deadline Jan 2013
- Implementation from Aug 2013

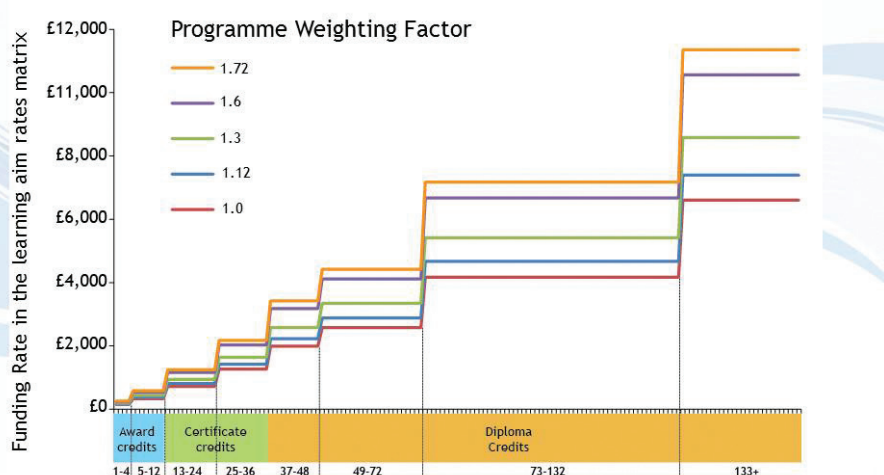
June 2012
Of interest to providers

In partnership with

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3

Return of bands, but funding by QCF credit



Funding Rate in the learning rates matrix

Programme Weighting Factor

- 1.72
- 1.6
- 1.3
- 1.12
- 1.0

£12,000
£11,000
£8,000
£6,000
£4,000
£2,000
£0

Award credits 1-4
Certificate credits 5-12
Diploma Credits 13-24
Diploma Credits 25-36
Diploma Credits 37-48
Diploma Credits 49-72
Diploma Credits 73-132
133+

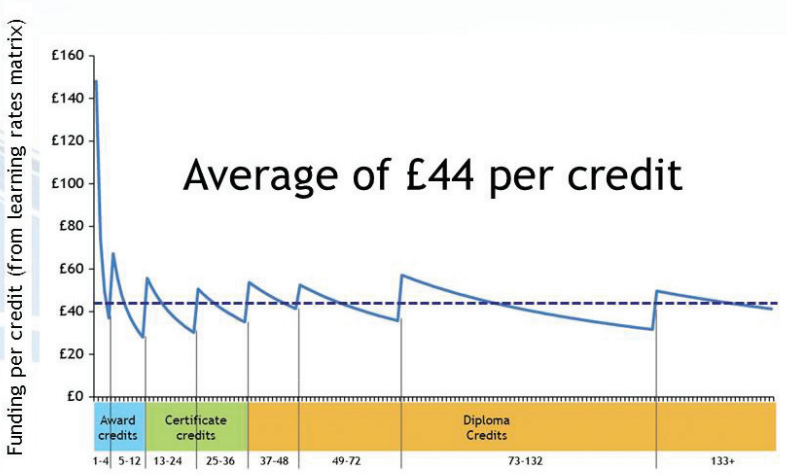
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Five areas still being tackled...

4

Funding per credit



Funding per credit (from learning rates matrix)

Average of £44 per credit

£160
£140
£120
£100
£80
£60
£40
£20
£0

Award credits 1-4
Certificate credits 5-12
Diploma Credits 13-24
Diploma Credits 25-36
Diploma Credits 37-48
Diploma Credits 49-72
Diploma Credits 73-132
133+

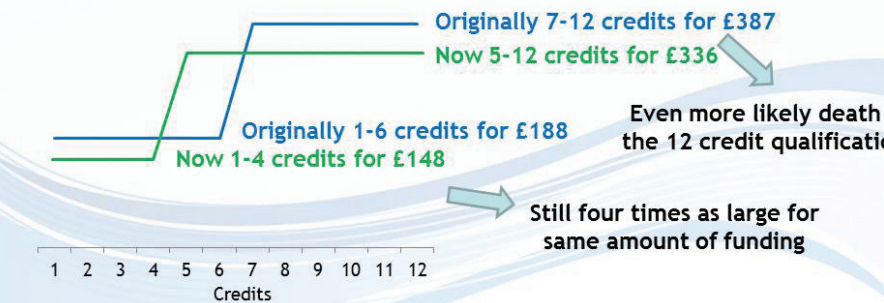
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Five areas (+2) still being tackled...

5

1. The very small qualification problem



Originally 7-12 credits for £387
Now 5-12 credits for £336

Originally 1-6 credits for £188
Now 1-4 credits for £148

Even more likely death of the 12 credit qualification?

Still four times as large for same amount of funding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Credits

Note: One more (13th credit) would add a massive £388!!

May not be the end of the story...

"We will however continue to monitor this aspect of the rates matrix in case we need to further refine the funding for low-credit learning aims."

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6

2. The non-QCF rate fudging (my term)

Example before: where different PWF used to avoid large variance

AQA L2	Old	SLN GLH	SLN	PWF	UW Rate	W Rate
60008891	GCSE Chemistry	150	0.3333	1.12 (B)	£2,615	£976

AQA L2	New	Rate	PWF	UW Rate	W Rate	Variance	Variance
60008891	GCSE Chemistry	Certificate (13-24)	1.3 (C)	£724	£941	-£35	-4%

The GCSE fudging now ended (so bigger variances appear)

But "For testing purposes, QAA Access to Higher Education learning aims will be funded at their current rates of £3,022 (PWF 1.0), £3,384 (1.12), £3,928 (1.3), £4,835 (1.6) and £5,197 (1.72)"

So not even on the funding rates matrix!

May not be the end of the story...

"Decisions on the final funding rates that will apply in 2013/14 will be taken in conjunction with the respective Departments as part of the annual investment statement work." So November 2012

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3. Ratio of GLH to Credit mitigation ⁷

Example before: different credit band used to avoid even larger variance

Construction Skills L2	New	LARA Credits	Shadow Funding Rate to mitigate	+ / - funding
60036795	NVQ Certificate in Innovative/Modern Methods of Construction (rec 87 glh)	26	Certificate (13-24)	+43%

"We are now working with Ofqual, FAB and individual awarding organisations to find a way of resolving this issue. We understand that there may be a range of factors as to why we have these outliers and the complexity involved. FAB are facilitating work with awarding organisations to look at the issue of outliers in each case and find a way forward."

May not be the end of the story...

"Where it is possible to resolve the issue of outliers, this will be done so that we can, where appropriate, update the LARA tables for these outlying learning aims in time for shadow working in 2012/13."

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4. Learning Aims not on matrix ⁸

May not be the end of the story...

"To ensure that the offer for learners with 'more complex' learning difficulties and/or disabilities is as comprehensive as possible we still need to consider further some of the current non-regulated and regulated but unlisted learning aims. We will confirm no later than July 2012 how we intend to fund these in the shadow funding calculation in 2012/13."

5. Stuff discovered along the way

"While developing the learning aim rates matrix we became aware of some anomalies with our current rates."

So will not be the end of the story as...

"The identified anomalies will be addressed in the shadow learning aim rates matrix for 2012/13."

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Also, are the boundary increases sustainable? ⁹

One extra credit	Boundary Increase
0 to 1 (£0 to £148)	£148
4 to 5 (£148 to £336)	£188
12 to 13 (£336 to £724)	£388
24 to 25 (£724 to £1,265)	£541
36 to 37 (£1,265 to £1,987)	£722
48 to 49 (£1,987 to £2,573)	£586
72 to 73 (£2,573 to £4,170)	£1,597
132 to 133 (£4,170 to £6,602)	£2,432

Have the SFA checked what the NAO think about £2,432 for an extra 10 hours of learning time?

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And what of Basic Skills? ¹⁰

"Analysis indicates that the most appropriate funding level for testing Functional Skills English and maths will be a base rate of 5-12 credit Awards, that is £336. Entry level maths will be tested at £437 (PWF 1.3)."
At current rates that is equivalent to 58 glh (currently unlisted)

May not be the end of the story...

"However, the Agency and Funding External Technical Advisory Group will continue to explore whether the current cohort data is representative of the delivery requirements for Functional Skills. We will therefore undertake further work over the summer with providers to assess whether we need to revisit this rate when setting the final funding level for 2013/14."

And "One of the key actions is to run a pilot to explore and determine how skills gained - or distance travelled - in English and maths can be assessed and measured; and to make recommendations to the Department and the Agency on how providers could be funded on the basis of the distance each learner has travelled."

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And Apprenticeships? ¹¹

"The proposal is to use the learning aim rates matrix with provision for an additional Apprenticeship element. This Apprenticeship element will reflect the additional activity a provider has to undertake when delivering an Apprenticeship programme."

Not be the end of the story...

"Work is now underway to establish and validate the size and use of the Apprenticeship element in time for shadow working in 2012/13"

"Given this continuing work, the Funding External Technical Advisory Group has recommended that Apprenticeship funding is not included in the next release of the shadow funding calculation in LIS 19.04."

"By the end of July we expect to have an initial view on the number and indicative values for the Apprenticeship 'uplifts', but these will need to be tested and further consulted on over the summer with providers and employers."

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Key month: January 2013 ¹²

2013/14 Funding Rules and evidence requirements published

2013/14 simplified funding rates confirmed

Shadow LIS available for use with 2012/13 data, which includes final funding policy for 2013/14

Implementation for real from August 2013

Immediate deadline: "by 4 July 2012"

LARA tables updated for:

- ~ Revised Award categories (1-4 and 5-12 credits)
- ~ GCE/GCSEs and QAA Access to Higher Education learning aims
- ~ Functional Skills English and maths learning aims.
- ~ LIScompanion software updated to support LIS 19.04

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FE Week event...

FE loans top summer data conference agenda

Shane Mann*@ShanerMann*

More than 180 representatives from colleges, training providers, universities and government agencies packed Morley College's main hall during the one warm summer's day we had late last month for the Lsect Summer Term Data Conference.

The termly conference, which is organised by Lsect, the publisher of *FE Week*, had a full agenda that treated delegates to a plethora of policy updates and developments in the sector.

Speakers included Karl Bentley, lead auditor at RSM Tenon, Alan Billingham, production and quality director at the Data Service, Mark Emerson, director of MIS at Chelmsford College, Peter Ashton, standards and quality manager at the *Information Authority*, and Andrew King, lead for 24+ advanced learning loans at BIS.

Andrew King gave the conference an update on the implementation of FE loans

for 2013/14. He told delegates that it was important to remember the context in which the loans were being introduced.

"Loans need to be seen in the context of lower public expenditure and greater shared responsibility for investment in training. Without loans there would be a significant reduction in learner numbers; with them we can support thousands more."

King also clarified eligibility for FE loans, saying that they would be available for learners over 24 at the start of their course, studying at level 3 or above. This includes QCF certificates and Diploma, Access to HE, A-levels and Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships.

"Our market research has indicated that about 75 per cent of learners would still consider learning following the introduction of loans; however, those over the age 40 are less likely to consider learning funded through a loan.

"The research also identified that there is a strong importance on ensuring that communication of loans is clear for learners.

We are continuing to research the potential barriers and are looking at options for providing additional support to those groups."

Peter Ashton spoke about the emerging data arrangements for the 24-plus advanced learning loans. The ILR data would be submitted for learners in receipt of a loan and colleges would utilise the existing, but adapted, HE loans system.

"Without loans there would be a significant reduction in learner numbers; with them we can support thousands more"

During the afternoon session Karl Bentley said that the upcoming round of funding audits was in its final stages of preparation and notifications of audit would be issued

soon. He reminded the conference that the audits would no longer cover distance learning and unitisation.

"The best advice I can provide is to prepare for the audit. Taking steps such as providing a clean ILR at least three weeks in advance to audit and provide a sample 10 days before, with your DSAT samples and comments. Remember if you have any problems speak to the auditor as soon as possible."

Nick Linford, the managing director of Lsect and managing editor of *FE Week*, also provided several workshop-style sessions throughout the day focusing on topics such as funding rules for 2012/13, developments with streamlined funding and remarks around where next for quality and demands.

Exhibitors at the event included Capita, Corero, Drake Lane Associates and Perspective.

Delegates networked, discussed the presentations, spoke to exhibitors about their products and services and enjoyed the all-you-can-eat ice cream from the Lsect Ice Cream Tricycle!





Andrew King, lead for FE loans at the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)



Nick Linford, managing director of Lsect and chair of the Summer Data Conference



A delegate enjoys the ice-cream on one of the few hot days so far this summer



Stephen Hewitt of Morley College asks the obligatory tough question

Sarah Bathie shares her experience, concerns and tips on student loans

What is your experience of the Students Loan Company (SLC) in HE?

With the rise in fees to £9,000, we have been running a national scholarship programme which the SLC is heavily involved with. The administration of the programme, making the payments, providing us with national data, that's something the SLC has been asked to take on.

FE is going to be just one more thing for the SLC and although they're using systems which are already setup, I think naturally enough BIS are trying to making light of what the implications might be. A colleague was just telling me that his college alone have 900 students that he believes are eligible. So from one college, that's another 900 students

in the system. I just worry it's going to get a bit creaky.

What are your concerns about the two week threshold?

I think that it's going to be critical from a student point of view, because imagine if you're a student and you're there for two weeks. If you come in on a Monday and think on Tuesday "oh do you know what, I don't really want this, it's not for me", that one day is potentially going to leave you with £1500, £2000 worth of debt.

So I think what FE colleagues have to realise is that it's all very well for them to say they wouldn't get their fees before two weeks anyway, but now when they get their fees they're

not going to be arguing with the SFA, the student is going to be in their face instead saying "why have you confirmed my attendance when I wasn't here? I'm now liable for this money, what are you going to do about it?"

It's the situation we've faced in HE for many years.

Recording the start date accurately is going to be quite crucial, isn't it?

Yes. You could get a student say 'well the start of term might be Monday, but I wasn't here. You didn't enrol me until Thursday, so why have you charged me for two weeks I didn't attend?' I can understand why BIS are underplaying it slightly, but I think it's going to be quite contentious.



Sarah Bathie is head of student funding and finance at the University of the Arts, London

FE Week event...

Sub-contracting woes: 'My story is not unique'

Shane Mann

@ShanerMann

Krissy Charles-Jones is determined that the subcontracting of apprenticeships has to change.

The chief executive of Bright International Training told the Apprenticeships England conference last week about the impact on her business when her prime contractor pulled the funding of a cohort of learners on a pilot programme.

“My advice to anybody in my situation is not to give up”

“This left us in a difficult position. We had delivered the course, paid registration fees, we had paid our staff and the learners were about to finish. In fact about half of them had already been offered jobs within the sector on the provision that they achieved this qualification.

“This is not new, my story is not unique. I have worked in the sector for over a decade. I have seen subcontractors go to the wall because of situations like mine and it is not acceptable.”

The conference, organised by Peter Cobrin and Lindsay McCurdy of the popular LinkedIn group 'Apprenticeships England', is the second this year. Held at the Queens Hotel in Leeds, more than 150 representatives from colleges and providers debated: “how we can continue to make apprenticeships even better.”

Charles-Jones was one of six sector representatives to take part in the morning's panel debate. The other panellists included Professor Jill Brunt, director of education at Pearson, Barry Brooks, director for education and Skills Strategy at Tribal, Scott Upton, vice-principal of Sandwell College and Ged Syddall, CEO of Elmfield Training.

Charles-Jones also outlined her frustrations with the response she received from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). The agency told her that “there was nothing they could do”, but she approached someone higher in the organisation

and her company was eventually partnered with an alternative prime provider.

“My advice to anybody in my situation is not to give up; you have to fight your corner, go as high as you have to within the SFA. Before you agree to work with a prime, make sure you do your own due diligence. Check their Ofsted report, other publicly available information and speak to other providers about their experience. Do not put all your eggs in one basket; put them in three of four. The SFA have to change their policies when it comes to subcontracting - from the minimum value a contract has to be before declaration to a guarantee of support from the SFA when things go wrong. At the moment it's just not acceptable; the SFA are responsible for what happens to our learners.”

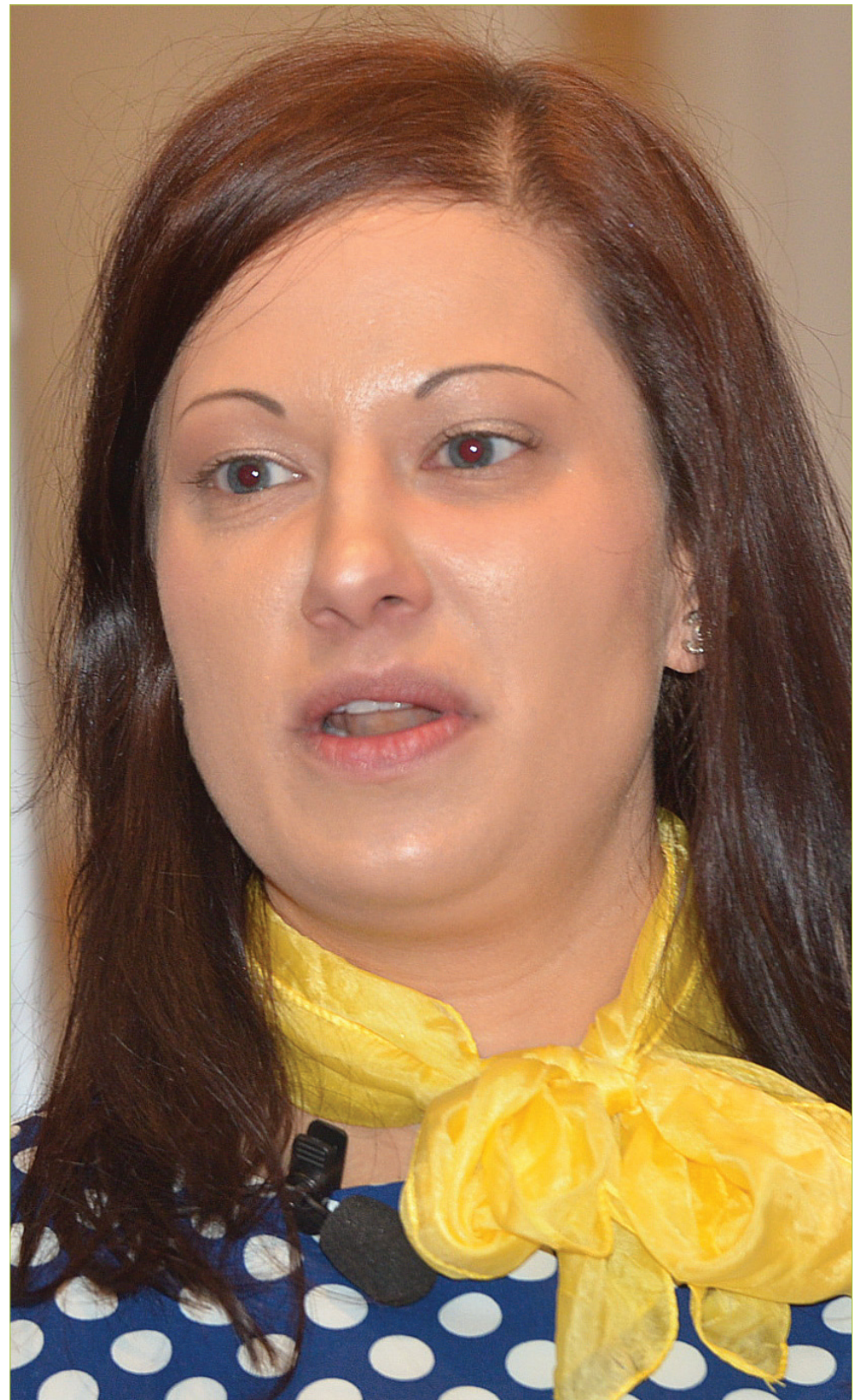
Panellists also raised concerns about management fees between prime providers and sub-contractors. Recent analysis from *FE Week* suggested that lead providers charged more than £175 million in management fees to sub-contractors during the previous academic year.

Making, what is thought to be one of his first public appearances at a sector conference following his evidence session at the BIS select committee earlier this year, Ged Syddall used the conference to announce that his organisation would no longer charge a “top-slice” to third sector and social enterprises from next year; a move well received by a representative of the organisation Deaf Apprentice.

“It's just not acceptable; the SFA are responsible for what happens to our learners”

The scheme, which will run as a pilot for the next academic year, will allow Elmfield to support the third sector and social enterprises in their work with apprentices.

Syddall added: “I am passionate about the current localism agenda and I believe that it is the third sector and social enterprises that truly underpin this. Therefore by piloting such a



Krissy Charles-Jones, chief executive of Bright International Training

scheme as an organisation we can help to drive this agenda.”

Scott Upton added: “Top-slicing is an area which needs to be looked at more thoroughly by the government and SFA. In my opinion, withdrawing these funds which can be anything up to 30 per cent, ultimately impacts on the quality of the education received by the learner.”

Chairing the debate, Nick Linford, managing editor of *FE Week*, referred to a line in the recently published SFA Annual Account that said, “The reasons for the large increase in subcontracting over the last year has been not only due to the expected growth, but because colleges have not been fully undertaking their responsibility in growing apprenticeships and instead subcontracting it to others.”

There was also some amusement when Scott Upton asked a series of questions about the current system. When the audience were asked whether “there was any real value in

the online Apprenticeships Vacancy Matching Service”, not one person raised his or her hand in support of the service, leading to Upton making the statement, “why don't they close the thing down, it costs money and resources to run and we spend great time uploading vacancies online. The money saved by its closure could be put towards expanding the successful advertising campaign which NAS have run.”

Peter Corbin and Lindsay McCurdy spoke to *FE Week* about the event's future as they will now be going their separate ways. McCurdy said that she would run her next conference in October, but with more of an employer focus and as Apprenticeships England (AE) Ltd.

Peter Cobrin added; “Lindsay's energy and knowledge is absolutely perfect for the area of employer engagement, which she now wishes to focus her time on. As for me, I will continue, through the Apprenticeships England CIC, the campaigning element.”



Ged Syddall, chief executive and owner of Elmfield Training Ltd, on the main stage, which was in front of an *FE Week* banner

Pictures by Shane Mann



The conference encouraged plenty of comments and questions from delegates



Peter Cobrin and Lindsay McCurdy will now be going their separate ways (*picture taken April 2012*)



FE Week campus round-up

Summer fayre at Barking & Dagenham



Students at Barking & Dagenham College tested their entrepreneurial skills at a summer market held at the College last month.

The event allowed students to create an idea, product or service and then sell it to the public. Students sold a variety of products including cakes, sweets, jewellery, clothing, accessories, cards and flowers, with some stalls selling out before the end of the day.

The market had about 25 professional stalls

and attracted hundreds of people.

Jenna Smith, senior marketing officer at the College said: "We were really shocked by how many members of the public came along. It was packed.

"It was a great opportunity for our students to show their entrepreneurial side, coming up with business ideas and following the process right through to selling."

Visitors had the chance to go on a bouncy castle, as well as meet pigs, baby goats, chicks and rabbits at a petting farm.

Olympic torch to pass through Brockenhurst



The Olympic torch is due to visit Brockenhurst College on July 14, an event that the College plans to celebrate by hosting a Sporting and Cultural Olympiad on the same day.

The event will give visitors the chance to try new sports, as well as bring the College and local residents closer together.

A marching band and dance display will showcase their abilities, with a varied programme of activities on offer, from archery to shooting to hockey.

The torch will pass through Brockenhurst just after 10.25am and will stop at the College for 20 minutes before continuing its journey through Hampshire.

Di Roberts, Brockenhurst's principal, said: "We strongly believe in giving back to our local community and what better way than to bring people together for this historic once in a lifetime opportunity and get up close to the Olympic Torch relay."

Canterbury College cyclists raise £1,100



Cyclists from Canterbury College have raised £1,100 after a sponsored ride from London to Paris for Hilary's Dream Trust, the charity set up by disabled sailor Hilary Lister.

Staff members who cycled the 280 miles presented the record-breaking adventurer with a cheque at the College's New Dover Road campus.

Hilary, who broke records by becoming the first disabled woman to sail solo around Britain, has visited the College to talk to students. She thanked Canterbury's riders on behalf of her Trust, which gives disabled people the opportunity to sail.

She said: "The support from Canterbury College is fantastic.

"I came here last year and people from the College just picked up the idea and ran with it. I hoping I can do more work with them in the future."

Nine members of staff spent four days riding from London to Paris last summer, accompanied by a support driver.

The money they made was split between Hilary's Dream Trust and The Soldier's Charity, formerly known as the Army Benevolent Fund.

Martyn Rogers, the College Registry Manager, was one of the riders. He said: "We were all inspired by her visit and presentation to the College and agreed that this would be a worthwhile charity to support."

Summer holiday help at City of Bath



Travel and tourism students from City of Bath College are helping staff to find the perfect destinations for their summer holidays.

After a brief chat with staff about the type of holiday they would like, the students research destinations, things to see - even airports and flight times

The idea is to give the students experience of dealing with "customers", as part of their studies. Lauren Angove, one of the students, said: "We've had a lot of fun and learned about the importance of a professional customer-focused attitude."



Nail art goes wild at Dearne Valley

Tropical climes have helped Lauren Sharpe win an in-house 3D nail competition at Dearne Valley College.

The competition brief was to create 3D acrylic nails with a historical or fantasy theme. Miss Sharpe, from Kilnhurst, Mexborough, was inspired by rainforest research materials before making the accessories from acrylic.

Claire Mynett, a College beauty therapy tutor, said: "The students have all worked really hard to create their 3D nails.

"There have been some really creative designs produced. All the students have put a lot of time and effort into some fantastic designs."

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk

Lights, camera, action, at Middlesbrough



Budding film-makers at Middlesbrough College have broken the golden rule of showbiz never to work with children or animals. St Peters School in South Bank commissioned creative media production students at the College to make an introductory film based on the school's "Little Book of Worries".

The book identifies the children's biggest worries about starting secondary school, such as getting lost, and reassures them that these things won't happen to them at St Peter's School.

All the "worries" are presented by two children at the school and are filmed in black

and white, with the "reality" of the situation then shown in colour.

Amy Glanville, the teacher at St Peters who commissioned the film, said: "The Middlesbrough team worked tirelessly on the project, with a level of professionalism that can only be described as impressive."

The film, from initial storyboarding to filming and editing, is the work of five BTEC creative media production Level 3 students; Liam Emmerson, Emily Tatters, Adam Angell, Amy Fall and Dan Charlton, and their tutor Tony Brown.

Derby students with the Olympic touch



More than 120 students from Derby College helped to keep spectators and runners safe during the Olympic torch relay last month.

The students, who all underwent stewarding and door supervisor training as part of their public services' course, acted as marshals along the route.

They had a wide range of duties including traffic management, maintaining order at key areas along the route and accompanying torch bearers through the city.

Edwin Watkins, a public services lecturer at the College, said: "The students have been working at many local events over the past 18 months to gain experience in event stewarding. This was invaluable in qualifying them for an important role in ensuring the

smooth running of the torch relay through the city."

After undergoing special training and work experience at several Derby events, the students have been now guaranteed interviews with G4S, the Olympics Games' security provider. So far more than 20 have been offered temporary jobs this summer.

Gareth Edwards, a public services student, said: "We have yet to be told just what we will be doing at the Olympic venues, but it will include security work and checking bags at entrances.

"This will all be great work experience and good for our CVs after College, as well giving us the chance to be involved in a once in a lifetime event."



Kensington and Chelsea creativity

A group of creative trailblazers from Kensington and Chelsea College are set to debut their collection of cutting edge designs at a leading national exhibition.

The New Designers Exhibition 2012 brings together the UK's graduating designers and gives them a platform to showcase their work to industry employers, the media and public.

This year, six students from the college's professional development designer makers course will be among the cream of the crop displaying their creative flair at the exhibition.

Their work includes stunning jewellery, glass and ceramic pieces.

Ksenia Goryainova, who is exhibiting her first jewellery collection, said: "My passion for bespoke is a driving force behind my collection. I am thrilled to be exhibiting for the first time in New Designers. It is such a solid and exciting platform for all design students."

Warrington College goback to school



Bernie Casey, curriculum manager for Carpentry and joinery at Warrington College, was delighted when St Bede's Catholic Junior School in Halton approached him to build them an outside classroom.

The former pupil of the school said: "It's a long time since I've been at the school, but it was a pleasure to go back with such an exciting project. Real work experience gives the students an insight into how the industry works, as well as creating an ideal opportunity to put their skills into practice."

Carpentry and joinery students, aged 18 and 19, used Metsä Wood timber materials to construct the outdoor classroom.

Mr Casey said: "After regularly receiving donations of Metsä Wood's premium timber for several years, we knew that the company would be more than happy to supply us with materials for the project."

Dancing down the catwalk at Doncaster



Hundreds have been watching South Yorkshire's newest fashion talent present their work at Doncaster College.

The annual shows were part of the student's end-of-year showcase, which included illustration, games animation art, graphic design, photography, multimedia presentations, fine arts and craft as well as performances from dance, theatre and music students.

Debbie Pulleyblank, assistant director for the school of arts, said: "These events always provide us with a great opportunity to showcase the exceptional, creative diversity and professional design and realisation skills of Doncaster College's and University Centre Doncaster art students and graduates."

Dozens of fashion students paraded their work in front of friends, family and industry experts at the popular show, which included an exciting and original collection of group fashion projects.

Business Development Officer x2

South East

£24,069 - £29,537, plus excellent benefits

We currently have an exciting opportunity for two Business Development Officers to join our progressive sales team, taking responsibility for the South East area. With excellent interpersonal skills, the successful candidate will be required to offer advice, support and guidance to new and existing customers on our products and services with a view to increasing sales.

Providing a personal service and delivering exceptional customer care, you'll be required to visit customers (further education colleges, private training providers and schools) on a daily basis. You'll develop effective working relationships with new and existing clients and will aim to do whatever you can to make their lives easier. It'll be your responsibility to organise and manage your own activities to reflect regional operational objectives and you'll be expected to contribute to national team meetings to review targets and plan team activities.

We're looking for a self-motivated and enthusiastic individual with previous field sales experience, ideally within an educational environment. With a strong customer focus, you'll have previously developed and maintained key working relationships and will be keen to provide support and advice wherever you can. Confidence and personality are important and you must be target driven with the desire to create opportunities and maximise sales growth.

1x based in the South East covering; East Anglia, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire
1x based in the South East covering; London, Middlesex, Sussex, Hampshire, Kent and Surrey.

Send your current CV and a covering letter to jobs@ncfe.org.uk, detailing the skills and relevant work experience which makes you suitable for the role.

You can also send your CV and cover letter by post: Human Resources Team, NCFE, Citygate, St James' Boulevard, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4JE

The closing date for this vacancy is 11 July 2012
First stage interviews to be held on 13 July 2012



For all vacancies, go to www.dearne-coll.ac.uk.
Alternatively, call 01709 513200 (24 hours)
or email recruitment@dearne-coll.ac.uk.

Work Based Learning Co-Ordinators (5 posts)

£23,284 to £26,211 per annum.

37 hours per week.

Developing and growing WBL and full cost training provision.

All posts are subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure. Please check the college website for details of these and other vacancies.

Closing date for applications:
Friday 20th July 2012 (noon).

www.dearne-coll.ac.uk



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Together, we will deliver an 'Outstanding' experience for each of our 17,000 learners, across three campuses.

Head of Marketing

Salary: £45 - £50k

We Need Your Help!

At South Essex College we have reviewed our marketing strategy and implemented many changes.

We have cut marketing channels that don't demonstrate a good ROI; invested in a new "responsive" website that will go live shortly; have implemented digital technology processes that save us time and provide the customer with a better experience; and have trained our staff in both traditional and digital marketing.

We are living in a period of great change and now need a Head of Marketing to take us to the next level.

If you enjoy a challenge and have the qualities it takes then please submit an application.

south essex college
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Help us
become
outstanding
across the
board

Closing Date:
**Thursday
12th July 2012**

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of our learners. All successful applicants will therefore be required to complete an enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure.

To find out more and apply, please visit:

www.SouthEssex.ac.uk



FUNDING AND PLANNING ASSOCIATE CONSULTANTS

QLA (Quality Leadership Associates) provides consultancy services for the learning and skills sector. We give advice and support to Colleges and Training Providers around quality services, inspection planning and funding and management information.

We are currently looking for individuals to join our team of associates with experience in the following areas;

- Senior & middle management experience of MIS in a College environment
- Detailed understanding of funding methodologies in learning and skills
- Experience of supporting curriculum planning
- Working knowledge of MIS applications used in FE.

Full and part time opportunities are available.

If you have the skills and experience above then please forward a full CV to Karla Archibald at karla.archibald@theskillsnetwork.co.uk

QLA
Quality Leadership Associates



Tameside College is the leading provider of post 16 education in the Borough of Tameside which lies to the east of Manchester. With over 6,000 students, the College provides a broad range of pre and post 16 provision and higher level programmes. Hyde Clarendon Sixth Form College is part of the Tameside College family and over the past 3 years has consistently achieved the best A Level success rates in the Borough. The College sponsors Droylsden Academy in East Manchester.

Head of Academic Studies

£38,303 - £41,516 pa

TC124

We wish to appoint an inspirational individual, with significant experience of curriculum innovation, to be a vital member of our management team, with responsibility for all A Level, Teacher Education and Access Provision.

These posts are vital to the effective planning, management and delivery of a responsive curriculum, in line with the College's strategic priorities.

You will have significant experience in successfully managing change, and your responsibilities will range from ensuring standards of excellence in teaching, learning and achievement, to agreeing the financial targets for the area and developing strategies to increase income streams.

Crucially, you will play a key role in helping to improve the students' experience of our courses and to expand their opportunities for employment or further study.

Closing date for both posts: Wednesday 11th July 2012.

Interview dates for both posts will be Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th July 2012.

For further details apply online at www.tameside.ac.uk/jobs.asp quoting the relevant reference number.

Human Resources, Tameside College, Beaufort Road, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6NX. Telephone: 0161 908 6643.

Minicom: 0161 908 6610.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



Head of Foundation Learning

£38,303 - £41,516 pa

TC125

We wish to appoint a talented and highly motivated individual to join our management team and have responsibility for Essential Skills and Entry Provision, 14 - 16 delivery, The Centre for Students with SPMLD (Dovestones) and E2E.



Don't forget you can still
advertise online during the
summer holidays

Contact:

chardelle.mason@feweek.co.uk

0208 1234 891





Career Opportunities Canterbury College

We are a Further and Higher Education College in the heart of Kent with over 9,000 students across 300 courses. Our £50m Campus is home to nearly 800 staff and we have great career opportunities which may be right for you.

Quality Assurance Manager ref: 12/51

37 hours per week, salary starting at £38,857 per annum

Situated in the heart of East Kent Canterbury College was established in 1947 and has grown to be one of the largest Further and Higher Education Colleges in the area. We are seeking to recruit a Quality Assurance Manager to ensure the effective application of the quality assurance systems within the College and to foster an ethos of continuous improvement. Working within the Funding and Performance Review team, the person we are looking for will have an understanding of current quality issues that affect the FE sector and be able to work effectively with staff across the College to support quality improvement.

Closing date: Thursday 12th July 2012 at 12 noon

For an information pack please call the Human Resources Office quoting the above reference or visit our web site.

Staff benefits include:

- Pension & Life Assurance Scheme
- Close to City Centre
- Sports Hall & Gym
- Generous Holiday Allowance



CLICK

www.canterburycollege.ac.uk/newjobs



CALL

01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone)

Canterbury College is an equal opportunities employer



MidKent College - a great place to work and learn

Teaching & Learning Managers

Come and join the team of one of the largest and most successful further and higher education colleges in the South East.

With state-of-the-art campuses in Medway and Maidstone and strong financial health, we are passionate about teaching, learning and the development of our staff.

We are now on the hunt for a new team of Teaching & Learning managers to drive forward a flexible, engaging and enterprising curriculum in the following areas:

- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Business
- IT, Creative Arts and ESOL
- Learning Support
- Media/Music Technology and Art & Design

MidKent College has achieved its best ever success rates and is looking for talented, self-motivated teaching professionals with a strong desire to take us to the next level.

Successful applicants will earn a basic salary of £38,169 and can look forward to 35 days annual leave, eligibility to join the teachers' pension scheme and other benefits.

So, think you're up to the job? Great - contact the College to request an application pack. Closing date: Friday 13 July

Tel: 01634 383706 • Email: job.applications@midkent.ac.uk



MidKent College

MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer

Employer Engagement Officer

Location: London

Salary: £24k + OTE 4-5k (negotiable)

Skills for Growth/Landmark is seeking an experienced Employer Engagement Officer to join their established team in Stratford.

Duties will include:

- >Promoting / selling range of training services.
- >Carry out sales & marketing calls / visits to companies to promote group services.
- >Recruit companies to participate in apprenticeships.
- >Engage new employers to recruit and develop staff training needs.
- >Carry out target and outcome reviews.
- >Seek to engage and collaborate with other partners in learning.
- >Maintain client records and ensure all administration is accurate and up to date and meet our audit requirements.
- >Apply company's own Safeguarding policies and practices.

Desired skills and experience:

- >Previous experience of working for a training provider or a recruitment agency.
- >Previous experience of working to targets.
- >Previous sales experience is essential.
- >Confidence to attend and present at client visits.
- >Computer literacy is essential and knowledge of MS Office is required.
- >Experience of recruiting and placing apprentices would be a distinct advantage.

This is a full time position on clearance of an enhanced CRB check.
If you are a pro-active, target driven individual who thrives on building relationships we would like to hear from you.
To apply please email your CV and salary expectations to ayeshakhan@landmarktraining.org.uk and request an application pack.



Book your advert early for the first edition in 2012/13 - published 10 September -

Contact:

chardelle.mason@feweek.co.uk

020 8123 4891

City College Plymouth is going places!



We are looking for high calibre and ambitious individuals to join our leadership team. As a college, we have a strong sense of community built around our core values of opportunity, enterprise and employability. There are many challenges ahead for education and we will embrace these with a positive and entrepreneurial outlook as together we strive to build a better Plymouth.

We are proud of our significantly improved quality profile. Our students' achievements are now amongst some of the highest in the country. Within Plymouth, we are the highest performing non-selective provider of post-16 education. We put our students and our community at the heart of all we do, and we have high expectations of ourselves and our students.

There is a real sense of excitement, enthusiasm and optimism within the College. Now really is the time to join us.

Director of Technology, Marine and Renewables

£48,019 to £52,991 (salary may be higher for an exceptional candidate)

The successful candidate will have a key focus on the priority sectors of technology (including engineering) and construction.

Candidates will have a background in one of these vocational areas, together with outstanding strategic leadership and operational management of complex delivery teams. An innovative and responsive approach to curriculum design and delivery is essential to provide students with the best possible skills and experience.

Director of Creative, Cultural and Digital Industries

£48,019 to £52,991 (salary may be higher for an exceptional candidate)

This is a new and exciting post established to build on our success in this area, and to transform the provision into a first choice destination for students wishing to pursue a career in the creative industries.

It is essential that candidates have a background in one of the three curriculum areas and have an interest in the other two. An innovative and responsive approach to curriculum design and delivery will be essential in order to provide students with the best possible skills and experience.

Head of Technology, Marine and Renewables

£36,937 to £39,763

Due to the continued expansion of our technology and engineering area, an experienced person is required to lead the curriculum team. The role offers an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic individual, committed to leading a dedicated teaching team who will deliver a well-established range of courses from entry level to level 4.

Registrar

£48,019 to £52,991 (salary may be higher for an exceptional candidate)

The Registrar is a new post created to provide leadership and oversight of the operational delivery of a range of administration services. The Registrar will lead the design and delivery of the College's academic registry strategy.

Candidates will have significant previous experience in leading successful organisational change and be passionate about excellent service delivery to students. Candidates should demonstrate a substantial record of significant achievement in supporting student attainment and outcomes.

Candidates for all of our leadership posts will have an uncompromising approach to improving teaching and learning, and positive outcomes for students.

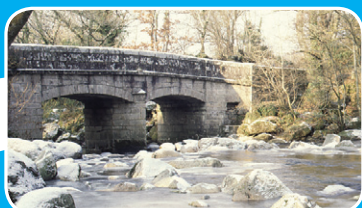
Deadline for applications to all posts is Friday 27 July 2012.

If you would like to apply for any of these vacancies,
please visit www.cityplym.ac.uk/jobs.

If you have any questions about applying for vacancies with
City College Plymouth, please contact Human Resources on 01752 305322
or e-mail: recruitment@cityplym.ac.uk.

www.cityplym.ac.uk

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- Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
- Health, Public Services and Care
- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Preparation for Life and Work
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise.

FE Week Sudoku challenge

8						3	2
					1		6
	2			7	1		4
7		2	8	9	3		
				1			
			7	2	5	4	9
	3		4	5			1
1		5					
6	7						8

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all
blank squares making
sure that each row,
column and 3 by 3 box
contains the numbers
1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

	6						
		9	5	6	1		2
					2		3
	4	2	8		9		7
	1						8
	5		1		3	4	2
	9		7				
5			9	2	4	8	
							1

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

3	6	2	8	5	7	1	9	4
5	1	7	2	9	4	6	8	3
4	9	8	3	1	6	2	7	5
7	4	6	5	3	8	9	1	2
1	2	5	7	6	9	3	4	8
8	3	9	4	2	1	7	5	6
9	8	1	6	4	3	5	2	7
6	5	4	1	7	2	8	3	9
2	7	3	9	8	5	4	6	1

Difficulty:
EASY

9	3	5	8	1	6	7	4	2
2	4	6	3	5	7	1	8	9
8	7	1	9	2	4	5	3	6
7	1	2	6	9	8	4	5	3
4	5	8	1	3	2	6	9	7
3	6	9	7	4	5	2	1	8
6	9	7	5	8	1	3	2	4
5	2	3	4	7	9	8	6	1
1	8	4	2	6	3	9	7	5

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE*
Week's biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I have been
at 'school' learning and playing"

You can also follow our *FE* Week mini-mascot
on Twitter @daniellinford